



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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November 2, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Lisa M. Hansknecht, Director, Office of State and Federal Relations

SUBJECT: State and Federal Legislative Update

STATE UPDATE

House Education Committee - Parent Empowerment Education Reform Package - UPDATE

The House Education Committee is currently holding meetings to accept testimony on Senate Bill 618 as passed the Senate. This is the bill that eliminates the current cap on university sponsored charters, as well as a great many other changes (see last month's report). I do not expect a vote until the week of November 7th or later in committee.

It is expected that after work on this bill is completed by the Committee, the Committee will begin addressing the other bills in this package as they arrive from the Senate (addressing cyber charter schools, conversion schools, and dual enrollment).

I would expect Senate Bill 618 to be voted on by the full House before the December holiday break. It is unclear if the other bills (619 through 624) will move by then or see action in the New Year.

Senate Education Committee

Senate Education recently held a hearing on SB 637 (S-1), requiring students to recite the pledge of allegiance each day in school. Per Chairman Pavlov, a vote before the committee is expected. The bill would require the board of a school district, intermediate district, or the board of directors of a public school academy to ensure that each pupil was required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States each day. The bill would require that the board ensure a United States flag was displayed in each classroom in which pupils were required to recite the pledge. The substitute bill provides for an opt-out provision.

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Senate Fiscal has raised the issue of additional costs to schools if flags are mandated to be purchased without providing for State funding.

Senate Appropriations Committee

The Senate Appropriations Committee is taking up a supplemental appropriation (HB 5014) that is expected to address the creation of the Office of Great Start and movement of some offices and programs from the Department of Human Services to the Michigan Department of Education by Executive Order 2011-8. While the version as passed the House did not include this, it is expected to be included in the Senate version. A hearing before the Committee is scheduled for November 2, 2011. This bill is likely to move through both chambers prior to the December holidays.

House K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee

The House K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee is holding several hearings on technology consolidation. Testimony from Tom Howell, Director of the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), various school districts, and various associations has been heard, and further testimony is coming. Chairman Rogers is reviewing the current technology systems of the State, local, and intermediate school districts from student information systems to payroll and accounting. He has expressed interest in consolidating and simplifying systems.

FEDERAL UPDATE

ESEA Flexibility and Reauthorization

The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee completed mark-up of a proposed bi-partisan Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization bill on October 18th. The next step is a hearing on November 8, 2011. The response to the draft has included many negative editorials and pushback from U.S. Secretary Duncan and members of the U.S. House who raised concerns about the potential loss of focus on achievement for all students and the direction the legislation is moving.

It is unlikely that Congress will approve a final bill that will be signed into law this year and once the New Year begins, election politics may slow any movement.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these or other legislative issues, please feel free to contact me at 517-335-5310.